

The Clothiers CASE truly Stated,

With an Answer to the REASONS against the Bill for the Encouragement of the Woollen-Manufacture, Humbly offered to the Parliament.

THE Clothier is brought under a Necessity of employing a Factor or a Packer in the Sale of his Cloth in the City of London; the Sale of Merchants Cloth being wholly drawn from the Publick Market of *Blackwell-Hall* into private Houses: And all the Windows of the said Hall are taken up by Factors, that the Clothier hath no convenient place to shew or sell his Cloth to Woollen-Drapers, &c.

This Alteration in Trade hath brought on a long Credit with Cloth, six Months, nine, and twelve Months, hath impoverished the Clothiers in twenty or thirty Years above sixty thousand Pounds in Losses, by broken Factors, hath occasioned three times that Value in bad Debts from Buyers of Cloth; the Price of Cloth hath been brought down from nine Shillings a Yard to six; which hath had as proportionable Effect upon the Price of Wooll, and consequently upon Land: This long Credit hath likewise necessitated the Clothiers to pay their Work-People with Commodities; which hath impoverished the Manufacturers so far, that many Parishes now pay three times as much to the Relief of their Poor as was paid twenty or thirty years since; which is well known to Gentlemen that live in Clothing Parts.

As Cloth is now sold by Factors and Packers, who act for the Interest of the Merchant, they may as easily get a greater Share of the Country-Gentleman's Estate, and bring down the Price of Wooll to twelve Shillings a Tod.

If the Merchant had not an advantage by the Sale of Cloth in private Houses, he would soon find out the Clothier, and encourage the publick Market of *Blackwell-Hall*, where all Cloth ought to be brought, and there sold.

The Design of the first Paragraph of the Bill is to prevent Deceit, that deceitful Cloth made of Pinions and Noyles, &c. should not be sold for Cloth made of perfect Fleece-Wooll; and since it is not easie to know it, the marking of such Cloth is as reasonable as that of Plate.

If such Cloth be mark'd, it doth not follow that it will be unvendable, as is ailedged, no more than the worst sort of *Colchester* Bays, call'd Cutts, and Rents, are less vendable than the best, called Crown-Bays, tho at a less Price; 'tis reasonable as well as just, that Cloth should be sold according to its real Goodness.

The Bill giveth a Permission to make broad Woollen-Cloth of Pinions, or Noyles, &c. with a distinction; which by the 21 of *Jac. 1. ch. 18.* now in force, is wholly prohibited under the Forfeiture of five Pounds for every such Cloth, and a larger Power given to Churchwardens and Overseers by the said Act than by the Bill.

Was the Proof of Pinion Cloth truly examined amongst our Soldiery, who now wear too much of it, there would be need of no more Argument to mark it.

Lambs-Wooll, and Vell-Wooll, which is likewise prohibited by the said Act, is usually sold for Flannels and Stockins, and more proper than for Broad-Cloth.

It is not the Design of the Clothiers of *Glocestershire* to get the Bill pass by Surprise, it being the Sense of much the greater number of Clothiers of the other Counties.

The *Blackwell-Hall* Factors are the Clothiers Servants, they paying them, and all the Duties of the Hall: If they think it not convenient to employ them, 'tis as reasonable for them to turn them off as any other Master their Servants; and the Rights and Priviledges of *Englishmen* will not be destroyed thereby: But it will be very hard to necessitate a Master to keep his Servant that he thinks not proper for him, and is richer than himself, which is the Clothiers Case.

The Bill provides to send up Factors out of the Country, (where there is occasion) that may be more under their Management than the present Factors who are become their Masters: So that there will be no inconveniency to Clothiers that live remote from *London*, and may think Factors necessary for the Management of their Trades.

The *Glocestershire* Clothiers have a place to unload their Cloth, but the Windows, and most convenient places are taken up by Factors.

The marking of Broad-Cloth with the Letters ~~W~~ crown'd, is to shew that the same is made of perfect Fleece-Wooll, as it was done in the Reigns of *Edward* the Sixth and others; so no new thing.

It was usual formerly for Clothiers to have a particular Mark (as the Law requires) when they made good Cloth; but since this deceitful Cloth hath been made, Marks have been alter'd to put it off.

The Statute-book is full of the Lengths and Breadths of Cloth, which hath many times been alter'd. The Lengths propos'd in the Bill relates to Long-Cloths, and not Short-Cloths, and so will not affect those places mentioned in the Reasons against the Bill.

'Tis very evident, That the Rents of Land is very much fallen within these forty Years; at which time the Sale of Cloth by Factors, as well as Fat Cattle and Sheep was very rare, or scarce known in the City of *London*.

It seems reasonable at this time, when Taxes are so great (though necessary for our Defence) to enquire into the Causes of the decay of the Clothing-Trade.